

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 057388
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:RPERITO:AJ
APPROVED BY EUR/SOV:MGARRISON
S/S-O :SRPVALERGA
S/MS:MSHULMAN

-----000641 070810Z /13

R 070017Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

S E C R E T STATE 057388

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UR

SUBJECT: SHULMAN-BESSMERTNYKH CONVERSATION OF MARCH 3, 1978

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE COMPLETE TEXT OF A SOVIET NON-PAPER ON SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, FEBRUARY 20-23. IT WAS PASSED TO MARSHALL SHULMAN DURING A MEETING WITH SOVIET EMBASSY MINISTER-COUNSELOR BESSMERTNYKH ON MARCH 3, 1978. A MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION OF THE MEETING IS BEING SENT SEPTEL.

2. BEGIN TEXT: IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED PRACTICE, WE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM THE US SIDE ABOUT THE VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF SYRIA, H. ASSAD, TO THE SOVIET UNION, FEBRUARY 20-23, 1978. THE TALKS OF L.I. BREZHNEV AND OTHER
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SOVIET LEADERS WITH ASSAD RECEIVED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN THE PRESS, AND THE RESULTS OF THE TALKS ARE REFLECTED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH WAS PUBLISHED. WITH RESPECT TO THE MIDDLE EAST, WE WOULD LIKE TO ADD THE FOLLOWING.

IN THE COURSE OF THE TALKS WITH THE SYRIANS WE PURSUED THE UNVARYING POLICY, OF WHICH THE US SIDE IS AWARE, OF REACH-

ING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UN RESOLUTIONS WHICH HAVE LAID THE BASIS FOR THIS AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT SOVIET-US STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST OF OCTOBER 1, 1977. WE

CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH A SETTLEMENT CAN BE REACHED ONLY THROUGH THE JOINT EFFORTS OF ALL PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED, WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES AS CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE.

THE ABANDONMENT OF SUCH JOINT EFFORTS AND THE CONDUCT OF SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL HAVE IN ESSENCE NULLIFIED EVERYTHING POSITIVE THAT WAS ACHIEVED EARLIER IN TERMS OF PREPARING FOR THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THE ARAB WORLD IS DEEPLY DIVIDED, AND THE EFFORTS AIMED AT REACHING A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT HAVE BEEN SET BACK. WE SPOKE PLAINLY TO THE SYRIANS ABOUT ALL THIS AND THEY FULLY AGREED WITH OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION WHICH HAS DEVELOPED.

THEY ALSO AGREE WITH US THAT THE ATTEMPTS TO END THE DEADLOCK IN THE SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS BY MEANS OF "QUIET DIPLOMACY" AND ADOPTION OF A SO-CALLED DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, WITH WHAT HAS NOW ALREADY ESSENTIALLY BECOME THE DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED STATES, WILL ONLY
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LEAD TO PROLONGING THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION OF SUCH SEPARATE ACTIVITY CAN ONLY BE ANOTHER UNSTABLE TRUCE, WHEREAS THE MIDDLE EAST NEEDS A STABLE AND JUST PEACE.

THE SYRIANS INTEND TO CONTINUE RESOLUTELY REJECTING THE CAPITULATIONIST TACTICS OF SADAT, PRESENTING IN OPPOSITION TO IT A UNITED FRONT OF ARAB STATES WHICH CONDUCT A POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, WHICH IS BASED ON PRINCIPLE. ASSAD CONFIRMED THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP'S REJECTION OF SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS AS A METHOD OF REACHING A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. HE STATED THAT SYRIA, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETINGS IN TRIPOLI AND ALGIERS, WILL CONTINUE TO OPPOSE THE SEPARATE DEALS OF SADAT.

FOR OUR PART, WE SPOKE IN FAVOR OF BRINGING THE MATTER OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT BACK INTO THE CHANNEL OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, WITH THE AIM OF CONSIDERING AT THAT CONFERENCE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. SUCH A SETTLEMENT MUST INCLUDE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM ALL ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967; ENSURING THE LEGITIMATE

RIGHTS OF THE ARAB PEOPLE OF PALESTINE, INCLUDING THEIR
RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR
OWN STATE; ENSURING THE INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE AND SECURITY
OF ALL THE STATES IN THIS AREA, INCLUDING ISRAEL. OF
COURSE, THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE MUST BE ORGANIZED IN

SUCH A WAY AS TO ENSURE FULL PARTICIPATION THEREIN O
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PLO AND PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY
OF TURNING THE CONFERENCE INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SEPARATE
DEALS.

ON THE WHOLE THE SYRIAN SIDE AGREED WITH THE CONSIDERATIONS
WE EXPRESSED REGARDING THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
AND THE FORM OF ACTION WHICH SHOULD BE FOLLOWED UNDER THE
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CONDITIONS EVOLVING THERE. ASSAD REAFFIRMED THAT SYRIA
CONTINUES TO SUPPORT RESOLUTION 242 OF THE SECURITY
COUNCIL AND DOES NOT OBJECT TO CONVENING THE GENEVA
CONFERENCE.

ON THE WHOLE WE ARE SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF ASSAD'S
VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, BEARING IN MIND THAT THEY WILL
SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE STRUGGLE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE
SETTLEMENT AND A JUST PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. END TEXT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, PAPERS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE057388
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RPERITO:AJ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780101-1039
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780397/aaaadehi.tel
Line Count: 146
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4ec132cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3415973
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHULMAN-BESSMERTNYKH CONVERSATION OF MARCH 3, 1978
TAGS: PDIP, UR, SY, (ASSAD, HAFIZ)
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4ec132cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014